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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 ANKARA 001628

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR EUR/SE (GARBE) AND EUR/CARC (HUNT)

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SUBJECT: U.S.-TURKEY STRATEGIC DIALOGUE TALKS, SEPTEMBER 5

REF: A. ANKARA 1611

B. ISTANBUL 482

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. During a four-hour meeting and working dinner with Under Secretary Burns September 5, Turkish MFA Under Secretary Apakan:
-- underscored Turkey's desire for close cooperation with the U.S.;
-- called for new impetus on the Nabucco pipeline;
-- stated that Ankara seeks to strengthen the Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan axis and normalize relations with Armenia;
-- promised to fix the Incirlik Hub Agreement renewal issue;
-- complained that Turkey is often excluded from NATO policy planning discussions, despite being a major troop contributor; and
-- insisted that the Cyprus talks rely on the established U.N. body of work.

U/S Burns emphasized that Russia's actions in Georgia "cross the line" and that Moscow must withdraw its troops and comply with the six-point agreement. Until then, the international community cannot conduct business as usual. He expressed concern that Ankara's proposed Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform may send the wrong signal to Russia because it appears to give Moscow a "respected place." END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.

Under Secretary William Burns
Ambassador Ross Wilson
POL Counselor Dan O'Grady
Deputy POL Counselor Chris Krafft

Turkey

Under Secretary Ertugrul Apakan
Deputy Under Secretary Unal Cevikoz
Deputy Under Secretary Haydar Berk
Director General for Americas Vefehan Ocak
Director General for Middle East Huseyin Dirioz
Director General for Policy Planning Dicle Kopuz
Deputy Director General for Americas Ersin Ercin
America Department Head Damla Say
Special Advisor to the Under Secretary Mustafa Pulat

CAUCASUS

¶3. (C) Noting Russian FM Lavrov's recent visit to Istanbul, Apakan said the Russians do not think they made a mistake. Rather, they believe their recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia has to be accepted. They also think the Georgia situation has changed the regional and global equation. Medvedev's five points all point to a "cold peace." Russian expressions are quite different today from one year ago. Russia does not intend to remain isolated, but will act forcefully in regions where Russia believes it should have a privileged position, including Russian-speaking minorities and Russian business interests (i.e., Gazprom). The Russian intervention was contrary to international law, and contrary to Russia's own previous positions.

¶4. (C) Apakan said that Turkey attaches great importance to Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The West should pursue unity with Georgia and ensure Georgia's western orientation. Turkey would also like to strengthen the Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan axis. At the same time, it plans to pursue normal relations with Armenia and contribute to resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through improvement of ties between Armenia and Azerbaijan. As part of this effort, President Gul plans to travel to Baku following his visit to Yerevan. Turkey wants also to keep strong its political and economic ties with Central Asia. Ukraine also needs attention.

¶5. (C) On energy, Ankara believes that the need for

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Nabucco has become increasingly apparent. For strategic reasons, Nabucco must get a new impetus. The Georgian crisis has shown how vulnerable pipelines are to regional aggression. A trans-Caspian pipeline is also important. Energy diversification and ties with Iraq -- both north and south -- deserve special attention. U/S Burns agreed with Apakan on the importance of Nabucco and energy security in general. The U.S. strongly supports weaving the Nabucco and trans-Caspian pipelines into the global system. The U.S. supports Turkey's outreach to Baghdad, that will be important not only for Iraq's political stability but also for ensuring greater diversity of energy supplies for Turkey and Europe.

¶6. (C) Apakan emphasized that we need a strong NATO. The NATO-Georgia relationship should be bolstered, as should the NATO-Ukraine Commission. Apakan noted we all need to consider how we can transfer OSCE principles to the Caucasus region. He also stressed that Turkey's role in ESDP must be increased so that Turkey can take part more actively.

¶7. (C) Turkey attaches great importance to the stability of the Black Sea region. Still, there should be no misunderstanding about Turkey's position vis-a-vis the U.S., he said. Ankara is always thinking how it can be helpful to the U.S. The recent Russian flights near the Turkish coast were seen as a threat. With the U.S., Turkey has shared objectives and a strategic partnership -- it is a "permanent part of our foreign policy." We have a close agenda with the U.S. "We count on the U.S. and you can count on us." Recent events show that we should increase our contacts and our cooperation, especially in the Eurasia region, and if either of us has a problem, we should let each other know. U.S. investment in Turkey is also a stabilizing factor and continued political and economic engagement by the U.S. and the West in the broader region is critical to creating an area that is safe and welcoming to democracy and open markets. Many in the region look at Georgia and realize the same could happen in Ukraine and other countries in the region.

RUSSIA

18. (C) U/S Burns said the Shared Vision document is a significant framework for U.S.-Turkey partnership. He would be pleased to meet U/S Apakan later in New York. There were many areas where the two countries could make progress together. Burns noted the increasing dangers posed by Russian assertiveness. The challenge is when they "cross the line." It was obvious that Saakashvili made mistakes, but the Russian response was wildly disproportionate. Russian troops had gone (and stayed) 200 kilometers into Georgia.

19. (C) Moscow has ignored the six-point plan and has recognized South Ossetian and Abkhazian independence. This requires a strong response, Burns said. Russia needs to comply with the six-point agreement and get its troops out, and we need OSCE monitors and an EU mission in. Until then, the international community cannot conduct business as usual. U/S Burns reviewed USG bilateral measures in response to Russian actions, including: the U.S. will likely withdraw the U.S.-Russia 123 nuclear agreement; cancelling some joint military exercises; G-8 meetings have been postponed. U/S Burns added that it is not the President's view that we should look to kick Russia out of the G-8. We need Russia to step back behind the lines it has crossed, and at the same time, we need to help get Georgia back on its feet. We appreciate Turkey's steps as custodian of the Montreux Convention. U.S. naval vessels are simply delivering humanitarian supplies and coming out. We remain mindful of Turkey's Montreux responsibilities, and the U.S. is not seeking an expanded naval presence in the Black Sea.

10. (C) Close coordination will be critical for Ukraine and other countries. We are not seeking confrontation but we want to make clear that these states can count on all of us. The consequences of Russian over-reaching will become apparent. Some economic consequences already are having an impact, as overseas investors pull out of Russia and the Russian stock market falls.

CSCP

11. (C) Apakan said Ankara hopes the Caucasus Security and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) could provide a synergy for

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discussion. The immediate impetus was to underscore Georgia's independence and territorial integrity, as well as that of the region's other countries. It was not intended to have a limited implementation, but rather to be long range. The idea is not to leave the three independent Caucasus countries to the discretion of Russia. On the contrary, CSCP shows that we (Turkey and the West) are here as well. Apakan stressed that Turkey does not view CSCP as an isolated regional discussion, but rather part of a broader international engagement with the region, noting, "We don't want to be alone with Russia here."

12. (C) U/S Burns said he understands Turkey's motivation and the potential utility of CSCP in the medium and long-term. However, in the short term, it does not send the right signal to Russia. It appears to give Russia a respected place in this new formation in the immediate aftermath of egregiously bad Russian behavior. In addition, it was unfortunate that there was no U.S.-Turkey dialogue ahead of time about this proposal. (Apakan responded that the crisis had occurred suddenly and during the summer vacation. He himself had just returned from holiday. Everyone had been caught unaware. When Russia moved on Tbilisi, we all understood what this meant for Georgia and all of us.)

IRAQ

¶13. (C) Apakan said Ankara wants the U.S. to succeed in Iraq. Iraqi stability and security will have a direct impact on Turkey. Ankara does not want Iraq divided into two or three entities. Ankara is focusing its efforts on maintaining Iraq's territorial integrity. It also has good ties with, and is supporting, the Maliki government.

Turkey is providing assistance to Iraq and is looking to conclude its bilateral agreement on military-to-military cooperation with Iraq so that it can help to arm and train Iraq's armed forces and further strengthen the bilateral relationship. The Iraqis appear to be waiting for the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework and Status of Forces Agreements to be finalized first. Ankara is not asking for early U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq. To the contrary, it supports the U.S. troop presence as long as it is necessary to create the stability needed for the GOI to maintain its control. Turkey is thankful for U.S. cooperation on intelligence sharing, as well as continued cooperation on arms

smuggling from Iraq. The GOT continues to seek a separate legal arrangement for Kirkuk that will ensure the rights of all its citizens are protected and will continue to support the efforts of the U.S. and UNAMI in this regard. Apakan noted that Iraq's internal administrative boundaries are not so important if we are all thinking in terms of establishing one, unified Iraq. He also noted Turkey would like to see international monitors in place to help ensure local elections go smoothly, especially in Kirkuk. The GOT is also pressing Iran to reduce its involvement in Iraq.

¶14. (C) U/S Burns agreed that we should keep in close touch on strategic agreements with Iraq and expressed U.S. support for Turkey's constructive role. He raised the issue of the Incirlik Hub agreement, the renewal for which is pending. Deputy U/S Berk said Ankara would "find a way" to resolve this. Apakan noted that because the legal basis for the Incirlik Hub agreement is a U.N. Security Council resolution (which expires in December), Ankara needs to find a different legal framework "to fix it." Ambassador pointed out that 75 percent of the air cargo for U.S. troops in Iraq goes through Incirlik. As they look ahead, U.S. military planners will have to begin planning alternatives within the next 4-6 weeks. The loss of Incirlik would be expensive and unhelpful for U.S.-Turkish Relations, the Ambassador added.

IRAN

¶15. (C) Apakan said Ankara has periodic contacts with the Iran's leaders. He referred to President Gul's recent meeting with President Ahmadinejad, noting that Turkey delivered a strong message urging Iran to comply with international obligations. (septel) Turkey does not intend to mediate or play a direct role but it is willing to convey a message if requested. Ankara views Iran's enrichment activities as a clear threat. Apakan seemed to dismiss the likelihood of concluding an energy cooperation agreement with

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Iran, while defending Turkey's rationale for pursuing such an agreement. Apakan noted that decades of talks with Iran have produced nothing. Turkey's main options for energy are Iraq, the Trans Caspian and Nabucco. U/S Burns stressed that Iran's current course would lead to further isolation and further financial and other measures by the US, and like-minded countries to raise pressure on Iran to change direction. .

MIDEAST

¶16. (C) Apakan said Turkey supports the Annapolis process, and views Palestinian unity as critical. Turkey has supported the parties by advancing development and other

projects, specifically through industrial zone projects in both Gaza and the West Bank, while Ankara's Bilkent University is also trying to establish a university on the Israel-Palestinian border in the West Bank. Turkey continues to press Syria to disengage from Lebanon, in the long-term hope that a new western-oriented Syria will eventually emerge. Meanwhile, the GOT has facilitated four rounds of Israel-Syria talks over the past eight months. Apakan observed that Syria desires US involvement in the dialogue. Ankara sees its role as a "starter" and "instigator" but does not envision playing an intermediary role for the long-term. U/S Burns welcomed Turkey's efforts and noted awareness that Syria may welcome an eventual American role. Apakan said the Turkish MFA is studying how OSCE principles could be translated to apply to the Middle East and handed over two papers laying out Turkish thinking on the issue (emailed to EUR/SE). Burns said the USG has also explored this concept, looking for a way to construct a framework similar to CSCE/Helsinki principles, and then using it to break down barriers, both internally and between nations in the region. He suggested that this could be discussed in more detail when he and Apakan meet in New York.

AFGHANISTAN

¶17. (C) Despite a half-century of Turkish contributions to Afghanistan, Apakan conceded that he is not optimistic. The Taliban appears resurgent. The Turkish PRT in Wardak is in an area that is again falling under the influence of the Taliban, and even in the Turkic-dominated northern provinces there is a renewed infiltration of Taliban. Still, Ankara is continuing its education and military assistance programs. He noted that Ankara no longer sees Dostum as a threat and urged that a way be found to leave him alone. Further moves against Dostum would be unhelpful with northern Afghans who are themselves helping to block the Taliban. It would also create domestic problems in Turkey. Apakan said Deputy U/S Sinirlioglu would visit Afghanistan in mid-September to talk further on this issue. U/S Burns said that the USG would greatly appreciate anything more that Turkey could do for the Afghan Army and suggested Sinirlioglu meet with Ambassador Wood while in Kabul.

PAKISTAN

¶18. (C) Apakan expressed concern about the fallout from the Pakistan presidential elections. Sharif was creating problems. We should not lose Pakistan, he said. The GOT will continue efforts to facilitate engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan. U/S Burns said he shares those concerns, particularly since Pakistan is a nuclear state. The government appears unwilling to make serious reform efforts and security measures alone in the tribal areas will not be enough.

BALKANS

¶19. (C) KOSOVO: Apakan suggested that more countries need to recognize Kosovo. Meanwhile, he was encouraging Ankara's Middle East Technical University to open a campus there. U/S Burns asked if Ankara could encourage the Saudis, so far reluctant to act, to recognize Kosovo. Apakan said Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries are sensitive about the issue of territorial integrity and will wait for a longer list of nations to recognize before moving forward themselves.

¶20. (C) MACEDONIA: Apakan said Ankara supports Macedonia,

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but does not want to hurt Greece. Therefore, as the USG requested, Turkey will delay the signing of its security

agreement with Skopje until after UNGA and tone down any language that might be objectionable to Athens.

NATO

¶21. (C) U/S Burns urged that Turkey work with us and others to find practical ways for NATO and the EU to work together on the ground in Kosovo. Apakan disagreed, saying that Turkey is one of the major troop contributors EU peacekeeping missions, but is not part of the policy planning for such operations. Apakan said this humiliates Turkey, which then finds itself isolated. NATO should act on consensus and not according to EU norms. NATO is the only place for real strategic discussions. Turkey wants to be treated equally, and NATO leaders should stand up and say that they need Turkey.

CYPRUS

¶22. (C) Apakan noted that the Greek Cypriots' rejection of the Annan Plan may have surprised many people, but it had not surprised the professionals who had been working on Cyprus. He underscored the many years of U.N. work that had produced key points: ten years of effort on "political equality"; 15 years of work on "equal status." It is critical that the U.N. body of work and these U.N. parameters be maintained. The Annan Plan had recognized that security and sovereignty are the main concerns for Turkish Cypriots, and property for the Greek Cypriots. It provided for the drawdown of Turkish troops over 30 months to a level of 650, and a continued Turkish guarantee, and Turkey stand by these elements. On power-sharing, the Dayton agreements could serve as a model. Apakan lamented the "asymmetry" that the Greek Cypriots turned down the Annan Plan but joined the EU, while the Turkish Cypriots said "yes" but remain isolated. The real Cyprus settlement will be Turkey joining the EU, he said.

¶23. (C) Apakan argued that the U.N. must retain its consistency. There is no going back to the 1970s. Ankara had complained about Annan but later understood that was the best they could do. He regretted that so many of the U.N. officials who worked on Cyprus -- De Soto, Camillion, Feissel -- are gone. The new U.N. officials should not ignore the previous U.N. work when they bring in new ideas.

¶24. (U) U/S Burns has cleared this cable.

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WILSON